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**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
Newport, R.I.**

**COAST GUARD FOREIGN ENGAGEMENT AND AFRICOM: IMPROVING THE  
OPERATIONAL PLANNING PROCESS**

**by**

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**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

**Signature: \_\_\_\_\_**

**04 May 2009**

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## **Abstract**

The U.S. strategic interest in Africa has grown over the past decade prompting the creation of AFRICOM. Charged with building the security capacity of our African partners, AFRICOM faces many challenges, particularly in the maritime domain. The U.S. Coast Guard can play a major role in AFRICOM's efforts, but to do so effectively, it must improve the process by which it plans international engagement programs at the operational level. This paper describes the various ways that the Coast Guard conducts its foreign engagement programs and explains why these programs are often successful, particularly in developing nations. It evaluates the processes used by the Coast Guard to plan these activities and discusses the limitations of these processes. Finally, the paper recommends specific improvements to the Coast Guard's foreign engagement planning processes that will allow the AFRICOM Commander to more effectively and efficiently employ limited Coast Guard resources within the AOR.

## INTRODUCTION

The African continent's economic, social, political, and military importance in global affairs has grown tremendously

- General William E. Ward, Commander, U.S. Africa Command<sup>1</sup>

In 1995, a Department of Defense (DoD) report concluded that, “ultimately, we see very little strategic interest in Africa.”<sup>2</sup> Since then, for many reasons, our nation's strategic interest in the African continent has grown dramatically. The 2002 National Security Strategy dedicated nearly an entire page to the discussion of Africa. In it, President Bush pointed out that, “In Africa, promise and opportunity sit side by side with disease, war, and desperate poverty.”<sup>3</sup> It is this combination of opportunity and strife that contributes to the instability that permeates the African continent. This instability is not limited to the continent itself, but extends into the maritime domain. According to General Ward, “The Horn of Africa, the Southwest Indian Ocean and Gulf of Guinea present complex maritime challenges such as criminal activity, piracy, environmental and fisheries violations, resource theft, arms smuggling, and narcotics and human trafficking.”<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, there are several factors that conspire to make these challenges difficult for U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) planners to address. First, until the formal establishment of AFRICOM in October, 2008, there was no single U.S. strategy for the continent as European Command,

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<sup>1</sup> William E. Ward, “Testimony,” House, *Statement Before the Armed Services Committee*, 110<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 2007, [http://web.lexis-nexis.com/congcomp/document?\\_m=67039c42343dc368a5a740bb78117793&\\_docnum=2&wchp=dGLzVtz-zSkSA&\\_md5=7e88776d5ed334f5df58cc55c2de4de0](http://web.lexis-nexis.com/congcomp/document?_m=67039c42343dc368a5a740bb78117793&_docnum=2&wchp=dGLzVtz-zSkSA&_md5=7e88776d5ed334f5df58cc55c2de4de0) (accessed 28 February, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Security Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa, *Report published by the Office of International Security Affairs*, Department of Defense, 01 August, 1995

<sup>3</sup> George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States*, (Washington, DC: White House, 2002), 10, <http://merln.ndu.edu/whitepapers/USnss2002.pdf> (accessed 01 March, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> William E. Ward, “Testimony,” House, *Statement Before the Armed Services Committee*, 110<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 2008, <http://www.africom.mil/getArticle.asp?art=1799> (accessed 28 February, 2009).

Central Command, and Pacific Command all shared responsibility.<sup>5</sup> While AFRICOM inherited several successful engagement programs from the other Unified Commands, the AFRICOM staff is only beginning to form the relationships necessary to function efficiently. Second, because the United States is currently involved in conflicts in both Iraq and Afghanistan, it may be difficult for AFRICOM to successfully compete for limited personnel and financial resources.<sup>6</sup>

*A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Sea Power* points out that “Maritime forces will work with others to ensure an adequate level of security and awareness in the maritime domain,” and the U.S. Coast Guard has embraced this guidance wholeheartedly.<sup>7</sup> For nearly two decades, the Coast Guard has conducted several Out of Hemisphere (OOH) deployments of major cutters to carry out engagement activities with the navies of many foreign nations.<sup>8</sup> These activities, planned by the Coast Guard’s Office of Major Cutter Forces, include joint exercises, training missions, port visits, and humanitarian assistance. In addition to these deployments, the Coast Guard has also conducted foreign engagement activities through international training programs since the 1960s.<sup>9</sup> Since then, the Coast Guard’s international training efforts have continually grown more robust, and now reach in excess of 2000 foreign students each year.<sup>10</sup> These international training activities are administered by the Coast Guard’s International Training Division (ITD) located in Yorktown, Virginia. Unfortunately,

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<sup>5</sup> William E. Ward, “Testimony,” 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Lauren Ploch, *Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2008), 11, <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/104287.pdf> (accessed 28 February, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> James T. Conway, Gary Roughead, and Thad W. Allen, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower*, October, 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Major cutters are those with O-5 or O-6 commanding officers. They range in length from 210 to 378 feet and displace 1,000 to 3,300 tons.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Coast Guard Training Center Yorktown, “International Training Branch,” <http://www.uscg.mil/tcyorktown/international/default.asp> (accessed 06 March, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> James Loy, “Shaping America’s Joint Maritime Forces: The Coast Guard in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” *Joint Forces Quarterly* 18 (Spring, 1998): 12.

there is little coordination between the training programs administered by the ITD and the OOH deployments conducted by major cutters. Moreover, neither the ITD nor the major cutter force managers coordinate their foreign engagement activity planning with the Geographic Combatant Commanders. The Coast Guard must improve its foreign engagement planning process to ensure that AFRICOM can more effectively capitalize upon the effectiveness of Coast Guard international engagement programs to build the capacity of African nations in its effort to promote regional maritime security.

### **HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

The U.S. Coast Guard, initially the Revenue Cutter Service, was established as a “narrowly defined, single-function service.”<sup>11</sup> While its original purpose was “to enforce customs regulations,” over time the service evolved into the multi-mission organization that it is today.<sup>12</sup> Officially, the Coast Guard’s five primary mission areas are maritime safety, maritime security, maritime mobility, national defense, and the protection of natural resources.<sup>13</sup> These broad mission areas are somewhat misleading as they do not adequately reflect the breadth of the missions that the Coast Guard performs on a daily basis. In fact, there are over 30 individual “employment categories” that are used to account for resource hours devoted to each specific operational mission area.<sup>14</sup>

The multi-mission nature of the Coast Guard has contributed significantly to its long history of international engagement. Aside from giving “technical advice and support for the negotiation of” the approximately 120 international maritime agreements to which the United

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<sup>11</sup> Patrick H. Roth and Richard D. Kohout, *U.S. Coast Guard: Purpose, Characteristics, Contributions, and Worth to the Nation* (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, 1997), 5.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>13</sup> U. S. Coast Guard, “Missions,” [www.uscg.mil/top/missions](http://www.uscg.mil/top/missions) (accessed 04 Mar 09).

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Coast Guard, *Abstract of Operations Reports*, Commandant Instruction Manual (COMDTINST) M3123.7J (Washington, DC: Headquarters U.S. Coast Guard, 17 September, 1992), 1-1 – 1-7, [http://www.uscg.mil/directives/cim/3000-3999/CIM\\_3123\\_7J.pdf](http://www.uscg.mil/directives/cim/3000-3999/CIM_3123_7J.pdf) (accessed 04 March, 2009).

States is a party, the Coast Guard conducts the majority of its international engagement operations through its International Training Division (ITD) and major cutter deployments.<sup>15</sup> Established in 1996 through the combination of several disparate training teams and overseen by the Coast Guard International Affairs Division, the ITD is the primary conduit through which the Coast Guard's international training efforts are channeled.<sup>16</sup> There are many ways that the ITD engages with other nations. Mobile Training Teams travel outside of the U.S. "providing technical training and consulting services in maritime law enforcement, marine safety and environmental protection, small boat operation and maintenance, search and rescue, port security, and infrastructure development for countries with waterway law enforcement programs."<sup>17</sup> Given the size of the service, the reach of these efforts is enormous. The staff of less than 50 conducts more than 130 deployments to more than 60 countries each year.<sup>18</sup> The ITD also operates the International Maritime Officers School which "provides an in-depth overview of U.S. Coast Guard organization, planning, and management of its missions to mid-grade coast guard, navy, maritime police, and civilian equivalent personnel from around the world."<sup>19</sup> Additionally, the IDT provides training curricula and instructors to major cutters deployed on foreign engagement missions.<sup>20</sup> Finally, more than 200 students from 60 nations annually attend resident technical training courses at the Coast Guard's training center in Yorktown, VA.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Roth and Kohout, *Characteristics, Contributions, and Worth*, 15.

<sup>16</sup> Ron Pailliotet, "Around the World," *Coast Guard*, October, 1999, 18.

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Coast Guard Training Center Yorktown, "International Training Division," <http://www.uscg.mil/tcyorktown/international/itd/default.asp> (accessed 06 March, 2009).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> U.S. Coast Guard Training Center Yorktown, "International Maritime Officer School," <http://www.uscg.mil/tcyorktown/international/Imoc/imoc.asp> (accessed 06 March, 2009).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> U.S. Coast Guard Training Center Yorktown, "International Training Branch," <http://www.uscg.mil/tcyorktown/international/default.asp> (accessed 06 March, 2009).



In addition to the efforts of the ITD, the Coast Guard conducts international engagement operations through OOH deployments of major cutters. These efforts are diverse in scope, ranging from participation in joint exercises such as UNITAS deployments circumnavigating South America to the enforcement of U.N. sanctions in the Persian Gulf. More importantly, exercises conducted with Mediterranean, Black, and Baltic Sea nations and the training of naval forces in “emerging democracies” have been tremendously successful.<sup>22</sup> For example, a report documenting the 1995 USCGC DALLAS deployment to the Mediterranean and Black Seas found many positive short- and long-term impacts of the cutter’s engagement activities.<sup>23</sup> More recently, CGC DALLAS deployed to Africa to conduct “the first multi-lateral combined maritime law enforcement operation ever conducted in Africa.”<sup>24</sup> In 2008, the Coast Guard allocated 370 underway days to OOH deployments.<sup>25</sup>

### **WHY IS THE COAST GUARD SO SUCCESSFUL?**

Admiral, I don’t want you to walk out of this room without understanding what high regard the developing countries have for the U.S. Coast Guard.

- Mexican President Salinas to Admiral Kime, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, October 1990<sup>26</sup>

The Coast Guard has had a tremendous amount of success in its international engagement efforts in many regions of the world. There are three primary reasons that the Coast Guard is oftentimes more successful than other branches of the U.S. military,

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<sup>22</sup> Loy, “Shaping,” 12.

<sup>23</sup> Richard D. Kohout, *USCGC DALLAS Med/Black Sea Deployment: Regional Engagement and USSG-USN Interoperability* (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, 1996), 2-3, <http://www.cna.org/documents/2795018300.pdf> (accessed 19 April, 2009).

<sup>24</sup> Phillip Heyl, “A Perfect Fit for Africa,” *Proceedings* 134, no. 8 (August, 2008), <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=1534485791&Fmt=7&clientId=18762&RQT=309&VName=PQD&cfc=1> (accessed 28 February, 2009).

<sup>25</sup> Michael Turdo (U.S. Coast Guard Office of Counterterrorism and Defense Operations), telephone call with author, 03 March, 2009.

<sup>26</sup> Bruce Stubbs, *The U.S. Coast Guard’s National Security Role in the Twenty First Century* (Newport, RI: Center for Naval Warfare Studies, 1992), 175.

particularly the U.S. Navy, in shaping operations with respect to maritime safety and security. First, the force structure and mission profile of many developing nations' navies, particularly those in Africa, are more similar to the U.S. Coast Guard than they are to the U.S. Navy. With regards to force structure, most often the issue is funding. Olutunde Oladimieji, a retired Nigerian Naval Officer points out that, "Funding dream navies of large ships and sophisticated weapons – even replacing ageing fleets – is beyond the means of most African countries, including the big ones."<sup>27</sup> However, even if many African nations had the financial means, the maritime threats that face these nations do not require a naval force similar to that of the U.S. Navy. The U.S. Navy is a blue water navy which is defined by Edmundo Gonzalez as one that is "designed to operate in the oceans of the world" and must be "capable of regional force projection."<sup>28</sup> He goes on to define a brown water navy, on the other hand, as "designed to operate in coastal waters."<sup>29</sup> African nations largely need less of a power projection navy and more of a Coast Guard given the threats that they face which are primarily, according to Vice Admiral Johannes Mudimu, Chief of the South African Navy, "unscrupulous elements [who] freely conduct criminal activities such as piracy, arms and drug smuggling, human trafficking, and poaching in certain seas off our continent."<sup>30</sup> He goes on to point out that "Without capable maritime forces, the safe passage of trade cannot be assured and the plundering of natural resources cannot be countered."<sup>31</sup> The capabilities of a maritime force required to effectively counter these threats are far more

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<sup>27</sup> Olutunde Oladimieji, "African Navies Need Reborn," *Proceedings* 124, no.3 (March, 1998), <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=26958966&Fmt=7&clientId=18762&RQT=309&VName=PQD> (accessed 28 February, 2008).

<sup>28</sup> Edmundo Gonzalez, "Redefining U.S. hemispheric interests: A bold naval agenda for the twenty-first century," *Naval War College Review* 51, no. 3 (Summer, 1998): 49.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Helmoed Heitman, "The South African Navy: Taking up a Greater Regional Security Role," *Naval Forces* 29, no. 4 (2008): 42.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

similar to those of the U.S. Coast Guard than they are to the U.S. Navy. In fact, Commodore Oladimieji points out that “[African navies] must not be scaled-down big navies, but should follow a coast guard model.”<sup>32</sup> This was summed up by a U.S. Navy Admiral following a Coast Guard cutter deployment to the Mediterranean Sea in 1995, who said, “What these countries need and can afford is Coast Guard-type missions and associated force structures.”<sup>33</sup>

The second reason that the U.S. Coast Guard is often more successful than the U.S. Navy in foreign engagement activities is because the Coast Guard’s presence is often far less threatening to foreign nations than is the presence of the Navy. Center for Naval Analyses researchers, Patrick Roth and Richard Kohout, point out that “the humanitarian and less threatening nature of the Coast Guard make it a valuable asset in domestic or international situations where Department of Defense (DoD) assets might appear unnecessarily threatening or be politically unacceptable.”<sup>34</sup> An unnamed former Geographic Combatant Commander suggests that, “the presence of a multi-mission Coast Guard cutter or contingent is often less threatening to Host Nation sovereignty concerns than a DoD asset would be simply because it is not perceived as a U.S. ‘military’ presence.”<sup>35</sup> Because of this, the Coast Guard is considered by many to be a “unique national policy instrument.”<sup>36</sup> For example, in the 1990s, while a naval ship was prevented from docking in Port-au-Prince, Haiti due to hostile crowds, Coast Guard cutters were able to continue freely entering and exiting the same port without incident and were “indispensable to the overall U.S. diplomatic response and support

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<sup>32</sup> Oladimieji, “African Navies”.

<sup>33</sup> Loy, “Shaping,” 13.

<sup>34</sup> Roth and Kohout, *Characteristics, Contributions, and Worth*, 15.

<sup>35</sup> Stubbs, *Coast Guard’s National Security Role*, 59.

<sup>36</sup> Roth and Kohout, *Characteristics, Contributions, and Worth*, 46.

for the U.N. attempt to restore democracy.”<sup>37</sup> The negative perceptions associated with U.S. military presence are particularly relevant in the AFRICOM AOR. The creation of AFRICOM was met with a significant amount of distrust and skepticism throughout the continent. A senior State Department official summed it up by noting that, “We’ve got a big image problem down there.”<sup>38</sup> While there are many reasons for African distrust in the U.S. military, one of the primary issues is Africa’s colonial past. Dr. Wafula Okumu, head of the African Security Analysis program at the Institute for Security Studies pointed out that, “Africa’s colonial history was characterized by military occupations, exploitation of its natural resources, and suppression of its people. After testing decades of independence, these countries are now jealously guarding their sovereignty.”<sup>39</sup> In his recent testimony before Congress, one researcher argued that, “any overt synergy between military and developmental initiatives will seriously undermine the credibility and acceptance of the latter, particularly in those states with large Muslim populations.”<sup>40</sup> Because of these perceptions the Coast Guard may perhaps be the most appropriate tool for maritime engagement with African nations.

The third reason that the Coast Guard is successful in its international engagement activities is because of its long history of international cooperation in many areas of maritime safety and security. Roth and Kohout suggest that “No other agency has the ... international and domestic web of contacts, partnerships, and working relationships; or predilection for

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<sup>37</sup> Loy, “Shaping,” 12.

<sup>38</sup> Wafula Okumu, “Testimony,” House, *Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health of the Committee on Foreign Affairs*, 110<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 2007, [http://web.lexis-nexis.com/congcomp/document?\\_m=e3bddf36ee63d680cc67e81a8aaccbe7&\\_docnum=3&wchp=dGLzVtz-zSkSA&\\_md5=d2bd3033f5d6d69f31e2e28dd11b71a9](http://web.lexis-nexis.com/congcomp/document?_m=e3bddf36ee63d680cc67e81a8aaccbe7&_docnum=3&wchp=dGLzVtz-zSkSA&_md5=d2bd3033f5d6d69f31e2e28dd11b71a9) (accessed 04 March, 2009).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Kurt Schillinger, “Testimony,” House, *Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health of the Committee on Foreign Affairs*, 110<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 2007, [http://web.lexis-nexis.com/congcomp/document?\\_m=e3bddf36ee63d680cc67e81a8aaccbe7&\\_docnum=4&wchp=dGLzVtz-zSkSA&\\_md5=d743b7bb5277e67b3c0b029dc0115c89](http://web.lexis-nexis.com/congcomp/document?_m=e3bddf36ee63d680cc67e81a8aaccbe7&_docnum=4&wchp=dGLzVtz-zSkSA&_md5=d743b7bb5277e67b3c0b029dc0115c89) (accessed 04 March, 2009).

cooperation and coordination.”<sup>41</sup> One need only look toward U.S. counterdrug efforts in the Caribbean to see an excellent example of how the Coast Guard has been able to leverage emerging and existing partnerships to achieve strategic goals through foreign engagement. Many of these engagements from joint counternarcotics operations to joint exercises such as TRADEWINDS and HALCON, made simpler by the more than 20 bilateral agreements with Caribbean nations, have been instrumental in the continued development of these nations’ maritime governance capacity.<sup>42</sup> In addition to formal relationships with foreign nations, the Coast Guard has also cultivated a series of equally important informal relationships.<sup>43</sup> Center for Naval Analyses researchers Seth Carus and Thomas Hirshfeld point out that, “...informal working-level relationships with local foreign authorities help assure that the [Coast Guard’s] mission is performed efficiently even when intergovernmental relations are more adversarial.”<sup>44</sup> For example, Roth and Kohout suggest that, “The Cubans’ trust in U.S. Coast Guard operations in and around their territorial waters is based largely upon previous direct experience and has been made acceptable by the Coast Guard’s humanitarian image.”<sup>45</sup> While much of the Coast Guard’s cooperative culture exists at the organizational level, a significant amount of trust and cooperation is developed at the individual level. A senior Coast Guard official noted that, “in particular our humanitarian nature as lifesavers, protectors of the environment, and the ability to help develop stronger economies make us a trusted partner. But it is our people who develop this trust by training, working, and operating alongside our foreign partners.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Roth and Kohout, *Characteristics, Contributions, and Worth*, 46.

<sup>42</sup> Eric Miller, “Coast Guard is a Partner in Caribbean Security,” *Proceedings* 125, no. 12 (December, 1999): 60.

<sup>43</sup> Seth Carus and Thomas Hirschfeld, *Coast Guard Future Direction Study: Capstone Support Analysis* (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, 1997), 9.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Roth and Kohout, *Characteristics, Contributions, and Worth*, 27.

<sup>46</sup> Miller, “Coast Guard is a Partner,” 59.

## COAST GUARD INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT - THE PLANNING PROCESS

Despite the fact that the Coast Guard represents an excellent resource for AFRICOM to employ in its efforts to improve the maritime governance capacity of African nations, the lack of an integrated planning process both internal to the Coast Guard as well as between the Coast Guard and the Geographic Combatant Commanders restricts the AFRICOM commander from using this resource to its full potential. In fact, a 1998 study suggests that, although many high-ranking Navy and DoD officials agree that the Coast Guard represents a significant capability vis-à-vis nation building and presence, “there is no indication in the responses that there is a concerted, dedicated, high-level effort to exploit this capability.”<sup>47</sup> There are several reasons for this.

First, while the ITD and major cutter force planners use differing methods to plan foreign engagement activities, neither group’s planning process is closely integrated with unified commanders’ planning processes or theater specific goals. With respect to major cutter force planning, resource hours for OOH deployments are allocated using the Coast Guard’s Standard Operational Planning Process (SOPP).<sup>48</sup> This process, developed by the Coast Guard and first used during FY 2007, seeks to, among other things, “Translate and communicate strategic intent, through planning guidance and direction, to influence mission execution.”<sup>49</sup> During this process, planners generate the Strategic Planning Direction (SPD) which “communicates to the Areas guidance and direction, priorities, performance targets, and resource ceilings across all missions” to “ensure that resource apportionment decisions

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<sup>47</sup> Stubbs, *Coast Guard’s National Security Role*, 176.

<sup>48</sup> Adam Wassarman (U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area Major Cutter Forces), e-mail message to author, 16 March, 2009.

<sup>49</sup> U.S. Coast Guard, *Coast Guard Standard Operational Planning Process*, Commandant Instruction (COMDTINST) 3120.4 (Washington, DC: Headquarters U.S. Coast Guard, 11 October, 2007), 1, [http://www.uscg.mil/directives/ci/3000-3999/CI\\_3120\\_4.pdf](http://www.uscg.mil/directives/ci/3000-3999/CI_3120_4.pdf) (accessed 20 March, 2009).

are made in a manner that ensures the Coast Guard achieves fiscal year mission-program performance targets in support of national priorities and goals.”<sup>50</sup> While the Coast Guard Office of Counterterrorism and Defense Operations (the Coast Guard’s primary liaison to the DoD) does provide input to the SOPP, there is no formal, integrated process through which Geographic Combatant Commanders’ priorities and security cooperation goals are incorporated into the development of the SPD.<sup>51</sup> Once force planners receive the finalized SPD containing the resource allocation for foreign engagements, Area cutter schedulers “work with Commander Fleet Forces Command and the Global Force Management Division to see where the Navy wants those days used.”<sup>52</sup> Because of the lack of planning integration between the Unified Commander and the Coast Guard, the Coast Guard ultimately becomes little more than a “resource of opportunity,” the employment of which never fully becoming part of the operational planning process.<sup>53</sup> The result, according to Stubbs is that, “chance and circumstances determine how the Coast Guard is used.”<sup>54</sup> While Coast Guard cutter force schedulers do not take this extreme view, they do concede that this planning process results in an “artificial demand schedule” from the DoD for Coast Guard assets and capabilities in support of Unified Commanders’ TSC plans.<sup>55</sup>

The approach employed by the ITD is quite different. The ITD conducts very little, if any, formal operational planning. While Coast Guard policy dictates that, “Properly bound international engagement activities readily support the Coast Guard’s vision and strategic

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>51</sup> Michael Turdo (U.S. Coast Guard Office of Counterterrorism and Defense Operations), telephone call with author, 03 March, 2009.

<sup>52</sup> Adam Wassarman (U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area Major Cutter Forces), e-mail message to author, 16 March, 2009.

<sup>53</sup> Stubbs, *Coast Guard’s National Security Role*, 154.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Michael Turdo (U.S. Coast Guard Office of Counterterrorism and Defense Operations), telephone call with author, 03 March, 2009.

goals and NSS objectives”, the process by which the ITD schedules activities can be categorized as passive.<sup>56</sup> The Coast Guard publishes and periodically updates a brochure listing all training opportunities available to foreign nations through the Coast Guard’s ITD. The brochure states that, “All nations with an interest in Coast Guard training should contact the American Embassy component in their country.”<sup>57</sup> In other words, foreign nations request engagement activities from the Coast Guard rather than the Coast Guard pursuing engagement programs with nations in a prioritized manner consistent with a Geographic Combatant Commander’s theater-specific goals. In fact, any interaction between the Coast Guard and the unified commander in whose AOR the training will take place generally occurs just prior to execution and is simply for informational and deconfliction purposes.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, because the cutter force managers and the ITD staffs plan their foreign engagement activities in isolation from one another, there is neither unity of command nor unity of effort with respect to the Coast Guard’s foreign engagement activities.

Second, the personnel assigned to Joint billets by the Coast Guard compounds the problem of integrated planning with respect to the Geographic Combatant Commanders. Fifty-five percent of the Coast Guard’s liaison billets “can be considered joint or interagency billets” and an additional twenty-five percent of liaison billets reside with the Navy.<sup>59</sup> However, Hindle points out that, “Commanders and below assigned to liaison duty are likely to wind up as staff officers. If the Coast Guard wants true liaison officers – unburdened by

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<sup>56</sup> U.S. Coast Guard, *Toward 2020 – U.S. Coast Guard International Strategic Plans*, Commandant Instruction (COMDTINST) 5710.2A (Washington, DC: Headquarters U.S. Coast Guard, 22 December, 1997), 1, [http://www.uscg.mil/directives/ci/5000-5999/CI\\_5710\\_2A.pdf](http://www.uscg.mil/directives/ci/5000-5999/CI_5710_2A.pdf) (accessed 08 March, 2009).

<sup>57</sup> U.S. Coast Guard, *International Training Manual*. Edition 12.1, Washington, DC: Headquarters, U.S. Coast Guard, 2005, 1.

<sup>58</sup> Nell Ero (Coast Guard International Affairs Staff), telephone call with author, 24 February, 2009.

<sup>59</sup> Alexander A. Hindle Jr., “The Coast Guard is Joint,” *Proceedings* 134, no. 12 (December, 1998), 31, <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=36899968&Fmt=7&clientId=18762&RQT=309&VName=PQD> (accessed 04 March, 2009).



action-officer duties – it must assign captains.”<sup>60</sup> While the Coast Guard does assign one captain to each of the unified commands, a greater senior officer presence is required to better integrate the Coast Guard’s capabilities into theater security cooperation plans.

Finally, perceptions among senior DoD officials, particularly senior Navy officers vary greatly with respect to the Coast Guard’s role within the national security framework. Some think that the Coast Guard should be used on an “*ad hoc*” basis only when “contingency plans are implemented and if Navy forces are inadequate.”<sup>61</sup> Others suggest that the Coast Guard should be used primarily to “protect the coastline of the United States itself” and should only be used in a greater role “in time of extreme need, not routinely.”<sup>62</sup> While some of these opinions might be quite difficult to change, particularly within the ranks of the Navy where its organizational culture is rooted deep in its history, the very construct of AFRICOM emphasizes an interagency approach that will perhaps provide the framework needed to break these perceptions.

### **ALREADY OPERATING AT MAXIMUM CAPACITY?**

The fact that demand for Coast Guard services exceeds our capacity has always been the case.

- Admiral Thad W. Allen, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard<sup>63</sup>

While most would agree that the Coast Guard is an excellent tool for improving African nations’ maritime security capacity, some would argue that the Coast Guard does not have the capacity to increase its focus on foreign engagement. Coast Guard Commandant, Admiral Thad W. Allen, pointed out in his 2009 State of the Coast Guard Address that, “The

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>61</sup> Stubbs, *Coast Guard’s National Security Role*, 154.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> ADM Thad W. Allen, Commandant, United States Coast Guard (address, National Press Club, Washington DC, 03 March, 2009), [http://www.uscg.mil/comdt/speeches/docs/Transcript\\_SOTCG\\_3-3-09.pdf](http://www.uscg.mil/comdt/speeches/docs/Transcript_SOTCG_3-3-09.pdf) (accessed 07 March, 2009).

good news is that there's never been a greater demand for our services. The bad news is there's never been a greater demand for our services.”<sup>64</sup> This demand was brought about largely by the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Prior to that date, the Coast Guard dedicated only 2 percent of its resources to port security.<sup>65</sup> While the Coast Guard dedicated almost 60 percent of its resources to port security for several months following the attacks, the number leveled off at roughly 28 percent – a significant increase.<sup>66</sup> Additionally, “fisheries enforcement dropped by as much as 90 percent after the attacks” and in 2002 “the service has boarded less than half of the number of fishing vessels it boarded [in 2001].”<sup>67</sup> Ultimately, the post-9/11 era represented a net increase to the Coast Guard's mission profile as “the law that created the Department of Homeland Security and transferred the Coast Guard there directed the service to maintain all former missions while taking on the formidable task of securing 361 U.S. ports while securing more than ninety-five thousand miles of coastline.”<sup>68</sup> Moreover, the Coast Guard's capacity to conduct its deepwater<sup>69</sup> missions has been significantly diminished by the fact that, “current deepwater ships are overworked, technologically obsolescent, costly to maintain or repair, and in urgent need of upgrading or replacement.”<sup>70</sup> In fact, in 2002, a senior Coast Guard official pointed out that, “[Deepwater

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Vivien Crea, “THE U.S. COAST GUARD: A Flexible Force for National Security,” *Naval War College Review* 60, no. 1 (winter, 2007), <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=1374588481&Fmt=7&clientId=18762&RQT=309&VName=PQD> (accessed 04 March, 2009).

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Patrick M. Stillman, “Deepwater and homeland security,” *Sea Power* 45, no. 12 (April, 2002), <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=113176617&Fmt=7&clientId=18762&RQT=309&VName=PQD> (accessed 04 March, 2009).

<sup>68</sup> Crea, “A Flexible Force”.

<sup>69</sup> The Coast Guard defines “deepwater” as any mission greater than 50 nautical miles from the U.S. coast.

<sup>70</sup> Stillman, “Deepwater and homeland security”.

cutters and aircraft] are increasingly incapable of efficiently conducting their 14 federally mandated missions and performing essential homeland security missions.”<sup>71</sup>

This argument is flawed for three reasons. First, despite the increase in responsibilities following the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> the Coast Guard rebounded. Vice Admiral Vivian Crea in 2007 pointed out that “Although our initial response to this new terrorist threat temporarily drained resources from other mission areas, we have worked to restore the maritime safety and security balance. Congress and the administration have provided critical funding support.”<sup>72</sup> Since the Coast Guard has been performing foreign engagement operations in the post-9/11 era, it should be able to continue to do so without sacrificing other obligations. Moreover, despite several delays along the way, new cutters designed and procured under the Coast Guard’s multi-year recapitalization plan known as “Deepwater” will soon begin to replace the Coast Guard’s ageing deepwater fleet. These new cutters “will enable the Coast Guard to operate more efficiently with the U.S. navy and with the navies of U.S. allies throughout the world.”<sup>73</sup> The improved capabilities and interoperability of deepwater assets were designed with foreign engagement missions in mind. A senior Coast Guard Official points out that these capabilities will “ensure that the United States and its overseas partners can effectively and efficiently meet the daunting needs for maritime safety and security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”<sup>74</sup> Specifically, the National Security Cutter (NSC) will replace the 1960s-era Hamilton Class cutters. The NSC offers improved capabilities such as “better sea keeping and higher sustained transit speeds, greater

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Crea, “A Flexible Force”.

<sup>73</sup> Stillman, “Deepwater and homeland security”.

<sup>74</sup> Scott C. Truver and Patrick M. Stillman, “The common-sense case for deepwater,” *Sea Power* 44, no. 8 (April, 2001), <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=71036194&Fmt=7&clientId=18762&RQT=309&VName=PQD> (accessed 04 March, 2009).

endurance and range, and the ability for launch and recovery, in higher sea states, of improved small boats, helicopters, and unmanned aerial vehicles.”<sup>75</sup> These improvements were designed to give the Coast Guard a capability in “executing the most challenging maritime security missions including supporting the mission requirements of the joint U.S. combatant commanders.”<sup>76</sup>

Second, to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of the Coast Guard’s foreign engagement capabilities, additional resource hours may not even be required, particularly in the AFRICOM AOR. Rather, by improving the ITD’s and major cutter force’s planning processes, the Coast Guard’s capabilities could be used more efficiently by ensuring that Coast Guard foreign engagement efforts are focused on meeting theater-specific objectives.

Finally, many of the major cutter foreign engagement activities come in the form of joint operations and exercises. Because these operations and exercises typically revolve around one or more of the Coast Guard’s primary mission areas, particularly in the AFRICOM AOR, the Coast Guard’s participation in these activities provides an invaluable opportunity for crewmembers to improve their core competencies. For example, as part of the Coast Guard Cutter DALLAS’s recent deployment to Africa, the cutter conducted a joint operation with the Cape Verde Coast Guard. Embarked Cape Verde Coast Guard personnel and U.S. Coast Guard personnel participated in combined law enforcement boardings within the nation’s territorial seas and Exclusive Economic Zone.<sup>77</sup> Because of the similarity between these boardings and the boardings that the Coast Guard carries out in support of its

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<sup>75</sup> U. S. Coast Guard Acquisition Directorate, “NSC: Project Description”, <http://www.uscg.mil/acquisition/nsc/projectdescription.asp> (accessed 20 March, 2009).

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Heyl, “A Perfect Fit”.

federally mandated missions in U.S. waters, the crewmembers of DALLAS were able to use this operation to maintain and even improve their own proficiency in a core mission area.<sup>78</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

In his recent congressional testimony, Kurt Shillinger of the South African Institute of International Affairs pointed out that, “AFRICOM seeks to boost African security and develop capacity through strategic partnerships. How might it do this without engendering resentment or suspicions – the manifestations of which today could be far worse and farther reaching than bruised dignity.”<sup>79</sup> While the stakes are indeed high, AFRICOM can more effectively capitalize upon the effectiveness of Coast Guard foreign engagement programs to build the capacity of African nations to promote regional maritime security. The Coast Guard has a history of very effective foreign engagement programs delivered through its International Training Division as well as through OOH major cutter deployments. The success of the Coast Guard’s foreign engagement activities, particularly when compared to other DoD efforts, can be attributed to three factors unique to the Coast Guard as an organization. First, the force structure and mission profile of many developing nations’ navies, particularly those in Africa, are more similar to the U.S. Coast Guard than they are to the U.S. Navy. Second, because of its reputation as a humanitarian organization, the mere presence of the Coast Guard is often less threatening to foreign nations than is the presence of the Navy. Finally, the Coast Guard has a long history of international cooperation with several nations in many areas of maritime safety and security, and can effectively build on existing partnerships. Unfortunately, the operational planning processes used by the ITD and the major cutter force planners in developing its foreign engagement programs are largely

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Shillinger, “Testimony”.

independent of each other as well as of the Geographic Combatant Commanders. This may result in a less than optimal use of the Coast Guard's capabilities vis-à-vis shaping operations, particularly with respect to the African Continent. Some would argue that the Coast Guard's current missions are stretching the organization's resources to the limit and additional mission requirements would force the Coast Guard to support those missions at the expense of its legacy missions. However, the combination of increased capabilities attained through the Deepwater acquisition program and a more robust and integrated planning process would maximize the effectiveness of the Coast Guard's foreign engagement efforts within the context of the unified commanders' theater strategic goals without requiring Coast Guard resources beyond those already committed to foreign engagement missions.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Given many African nations' predilection toward distrust of the U.S. military combined with the maritime threats they face, the Coast Guard can be a valuable shaping tool at the disposal of AFRICOM. To ensure that the limited resources that the Coast Guard can direct toward international engagement activities are not frittered away through a peace meal employment effort, the Coast Guard must improve its planning process. Joint Publication 3-0 defines the term economy of force as "the judicious employment and distribution of forces."<sup>80</sup> While this term is generally used within the context of combat, it is also applicable to the non-combat employment of force, particularly with respect to the effective use of the Coast Guard in shaping operations. This economy of force can be achieved by developing a more robust operational planning process that not only integrates and coordinates the efforts

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<sup>80</sup> Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operations*, final coordination, Joint Publication (JP) 3-0 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 17 September, 2006), A-2.

of major cutter forces and the ITD, but includes input from the Geographic Combatant Commanders early in the planning process. This can be accomplished by making the following three changes. First, the major cutter force schedulers and the ITD staff should engage in a deliberate planning effort using the Joint Operational Planning Process (JOPP) to guide their efforts. Using the JOPP will not only improve upon the current planning process, particularly with respect to the ITD, and ensure coordination within the Coast Guard, but the process and terminology are more familiar to the Geographic Combatant Commander staffs. Second, to ensure that Coast Guard efforts are aligned with theater-specific goals, the Coast Guard must include input from the Geographic Combatant Commanders during the planning process as opposed to just prior to execution. Finally, the Coast Guard must also assess many aspects of its assignment process with respect to joint billets to ensure that it can “leverage joint billets to extract the maximum benefit to the service by assigning officers of the appropriate grade.”<sup>81</sup> Because of limited personnel resources throughout the Coast Guard, this may be difficult to do but would be worth the investment in support of AFRICOM initiatives.

While there are many barriers to implementing this level of integration, those barriers may be more easily torn down at AFRICOM than at any other Unified Command. Because the very construct of AFRICOM represents a “new way for a Unified Command to fulfill its role in supporting the security interests of our nation” that relies heavily on an interagency approach, the task of integrating Coast Guard and DoD planning efforts may be reasonably achievable in the short term.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Hindle, “The Coast Guard is joint,” 33.

<sup>82</sup> William E. Ward, “Testimony,” 2008.

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